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American Party (N.Y.)

Address to the people of
the State of New-York

New-York

1844

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American Party (N.Y.) Address to the people of the state of New-York, by the
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ADDRESS

TO THE

People of the State of New-York,

BY THE

GENERAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

AMERICAN REPUBLICAN PARTY

OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

"I stood up in the Great Hall of Enthroned Monarchs, and had the respect of a congregation of Kings, for I was an American citizen."—*Dewey.*

"Let the blessings and privileges of our country and her institutions be free for all mankind—their protection and control the care of ourselves alone."—*Colan.*

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1844.

MEMBERS

OF THE

American Republican General Executive Committee.

1st Ward.

Edward Prime,
Asa B. Perkins,
Lora Nash.

Second Ward.

Henry A. Fay,
Alfred H. Davies,
Stephen Carr.

Third Ward.

James J. Broas,
Samuel S. Parker,
Cornwell S. Roe.

Fourth Ward.

Sidney H. Stuart,
Joseph Hufty,
Barney Corse.

Fifth Ward.

James A. Morton.
James M. Davidson,
George W. Morton.

Sixth Ward.

Abraham Florentine,
Henry H. Siler,
Henry S. Mansfield.

Seventh Ward.

Alexander Copeland,
Jesse C. Wood,
Edwin F. Corey.

Eighth Ward.

Thomas M. Woodruff,
Stephen Hyde,
William F. Piatt,

Ninth Ward.

John F. Dayton,

David Kipp,
John Golder.

Tenth Ward.

Job Haskell,
William H. Humbert,
Pardon Lapham.

Eleventh Ward.

Thomas Hogan,
John W. Gould,
Thomas R. Hull.

Twelfth Ward.

John Meggs,
John B. Morrell,
John Waite.

Thirteenth Ward.

Dr. Eli Leavitt,
James French,
Dr. John B. Dennis.

Fourteenth Ward.

Daniel G. Taylor,
Benjamin R. Theall,
Cornelius L. Purdy.

Fifteenth Ward.

Philo L. Mills,
Dr. James C. Forrester,
Richard Warren.

Sixteenth Ward.

Joel Kelly,
Wm. L. Carman.
Vacancy.

Seventeenth Ward.

Walter Briggs,
Benjamin Merritt,
E. T. Brown.

ADDRESS.

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the American Republican Party of the city of New York, desirous that the people (both native and adopted), not only of our own city, but also of this mighty Empire State, should be fully and TRULY acquainted with the principles which this party entertain, have herewith published a brief exposition of our political Faith and Creed—*so far as seems at present to be demanded.* And this manner of giving a greater and more reliable publicity to so much of our policy and purpose as is herein contained, has been resorted to for the reason that the partizan papers and political demagogues of both the great adverse parties of the day, have resorted to almost every means by which to falsify our measures and impugn our motives; and the object and end of their false and unwarrantable opposition, is to anticipate and prejudice the reception of our principles by those of our fellow-citizens who have never yet been correctly advised of what our measures are, and in what manner and respect we differ from the two other political bodies of the time.

To those whose knowledge of the principles of the American Republican Party is such only as has been obtained from our political foes, this paper is respectfully dedicated: and if, after reading it, it is judged that our principles are not in consonance with the good of our common country, and do not comport and accord with the character of our people, and the genius of our institutions, no support is desired; while, on the contrary, if they commend themselves to the true friends of our religious, civil, and political institutions, as better worthy their approval and entertainment than the cant professions of either the other political parties, a support of our cause is earnestly solicited.

The first, and probably most ostensible principle of the American Republican party is, that the Naturalization Laws shall be so altered as to make it necessary for all persons of foreign birth to reside TWENTY-ONE YEARS in the United States, before they shall be entitled to the privilege of the *elective franchise*: and for this opinion, and the avowed purpose of using every honorable means to resolve it into a law, we are charged by the political demagogues of both the adverse parties, not only with distant, unkind, and hostile feelings toward foreigners, but also with an effort to wrest from them their religious, civil, and political rights; every charge of which is as certainly false, as it is that a majority of those who make them are, for selfish ends, foes to the true interest of this Government, or that they are hypocrites in their loud professions of regard for the foreigner's rights.

The members of the American Republican Party profess to be, and are all as ready (and with an honest purpose), to extend the hand of hearty welcome to the foreigners who come among us, as the most ultra Whig or Democratic partizan *croaker*, who, for party purposes, professes to be so regardless of the foreigners claims to political privileges.

We are *not* the enemies of foreigners, nor unwilling to see them come to

our country and live among us. We have no disposition whatever to proscrib[e] them from the full and free exercise of all the privileges and advantages of our common country which we ourselves enjoy; nor do we hold any desire to do violence to any of the civil or religious rights "which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them to:" on the contrary, we are willing and anxious that all the blessings of our institutions, the full protection of our laws, and the favors of our political compact, shall be as fully, fairly, and freely extended to those of foreign birth, as to the native born. We are desirous and content that all the avenues to wealth, prosperity, and happiness, shall be as widely and clearly opened to them as to us; and that the individual rights, relations, and obligations of our social community shall be as kindly and scrupulously observed between foreigner and native, as between natives themselves. In a word, *that we shall be one people*—possessing and enjoying the same privileges, interests, and rights, *alone excepting the privilege of the elective franchise*; which it is proposed to withhold from the foreigner until he has resided among us the term of TWENTY-ONE YEARS. And this exception is made upon the conviction that the nature and character of our institutions absolutely forbid that they should be *too soon* (even in part) entrusted to the care and control of a class of persons who, (though never so honest and well-disposed), *are of foreign birth, allegiance, prejudice, and political education*.

We do not contend but that the foreign as well as the native-born citizen has a right to participate in the legislation and administration of the laws that govern him, but we do contend that the peculiar form and nature of our government require that that right should not be extended to the foreigner until he has resided among us, not only long enough to learn the letter of our Constitution and spirit of our laws, but until he shall have had sufficient time *completely and entirely* to divest himself of all prejudice for the government and country of his birth and education, and so have become so incorporated with the genius of our institutions, so imbued with a love for our country, and so identified with the welfare and perpetuity of our government, as to be in *spirit and in fact* as truly an American as though to the "manor born." *Then, and not till then*, should he foreigner be privileged to take a part in making our laws, maintaining our government, and conducting the great interests of our nation.

Not only do all the thoughtful and jealous native-born friends of our free institutions concur in this view of a foreigner's rights and privileges *as they stand connected with our government*, but also (and to their honor) do a majority of the intelligent and well disposed of our foreign-born citizens.

The members of the Convention who framed and signed the Constitution of these United States long and earnestly discussed the question relative to the time necessary for naturalization—many believing that the time should be specified in the Constitution, and among those there were *none* who contended for a less term than *fourteen years*, nor any for a greater than *twenty-one*; while there were another part of the members, who held that the whole matter should be left to Congress, they arguing that it was *then* desirable, to people this country as fast as possible; and as a greater means to so that end, it would be the policy of Congress, *for the first few ensuing years*, to make the term as brief as possible—leaving it in the power of that body, at all future time, to extend the term as prudence and a jealous regard for the safety and perpetuity of the Republic demanded.

Such, and *such only*, were the views and opinions held and expressed by the sage authors of that mighty base upon which rests the whole fabric of our government.

If violence be done the political rights of the foreigner by denying him the privilege of voting until after a residence in this country of twenty-one years, then also is the same violence (in principle) done him by a refusal of that right for five years; and if it be proscription to deny him eligibility to office under twenty-one years, how greater is the wrong done him by a refusal altogether of an election to the Chief Magistracy of the Union, as also to the Gubernatorial Chair of seven of the States of our confederation, including the State of New-York.

But we affirm that in *neither case*, is there any just rights or entitled privileges withheld from the foreigner; *and for the reason that the true science of politics* (with us at least) *is based upon the great question from which the term is derived, viz: the best policy of maintaining and perpetuating our glorious republican form of government; and the elective franchise is the "Inalienable Right" of those ONLY, who, by birth, education, and love of liberty, are prepared and disposed to exercise it to that end.*

A distinguished historian (Mach. Disc. 1. cap. vi.) in assigning a reason for the great duration of the VENETIAN REPUBLIC, says that "When they thought they were in sufficient numbers to maintain the commonwealth, they prevented all others who came anew to inhabit there, from taking part in the Government." This measure could be adopted and maintained without disturbance; because, when it was adopted, whoever then inhabited the state had a share in the administration, of which no one could complain; those who came afterward to dwell there finding the state firmly established and the Government settled, had neither cause nor opportunity for making disturbance. The cause did not exist, because *nothing had been taken from them*: opportunity there was none, because *the Government kept them in check, and did not employ them in any matter from which they could derive authority. Not receiving foreigners in their republic they had no opportunity of becoming corrupt.*"

There is one subject composing a part of the principles of this Party, on account of which they are most anxious to extend the time of naturalization. We allude to the subject of PAPACY.

While this party disclaims holding any more hostile feelings toward that system of Christian Faith *as such*, than toward Protestantism, still we are frank to confess, that, judging from the past history of that Church in all ages of the European world, *and from the evidences of its character and purpose already exhibited in the United States*, (not the least of which was an Act by the Legislature of this State—passed by the order and under the dictation of the Catholics of this city—*to expel the Bible from our Common Schools*), that we are distrustful of the baneful influence it may yet exert over the politics of this country. It is not to be denied that the Roman Catholic system of religion is inimical to Political liberty, and it must also be admitted, that in all the nations of Europe, where Papacy has been the predominant religion of the State, the Church has always assumed the whole direction and control of the government. It has ever claimed and exercised the right of being, *at one and the same time*, the religious, civil and political government of the people.

If this be so,—and if, too, it is the proud boast of this Church that nor

principles, policy, and purpose *have, are and will be ever the same*,—and if, also, the most superficial observer can look back among the nations of the Old World and see *ignorance, vice, and superstition* the peculiar characteristics of those people who have been crushed by the iron heel of her despotism, and who are still bending under the heavy hand of her Religious Oppression, is it not our bounden duty to use every possible means that shall tend to protect our own happy country from the withering embrace of her baneful influence?

It is because a large majority of the emigrants to our shores (from Catholic countries,) are the ignorant superstitious excremental population of those nations, all of whom acknowledge their highest obligations to the Pope and their Church, and all obedient to the mandate of a corrupt and designing priesthood, that we are desirous of so extending the Naturalization Laws as shall, in some degree, at least, protect our Institutions from the direful influence of the Romish Church, and our Elections from the control of Catholic Bishops.

We again emphatically declare—and hope to be so understood by both FRIENDS and FOES—that we, as a political party, entertained no unfriendly feelings whatever towards the Catholic Church, *as a religious institution disconnected with the politics of our country*; nor, indeed, against any other Church which does not seek an alliance with matters of State; while at the same time, we are at open hostility with ANY and ALL Religious Churches, Sects, and Denominations, of whatever name or character, that shall in *any manner and for any purpose*, interfere with the political institutions of our land.

If it be said that our acts accord not with our words,—for we have only (as yet) “assaulted the Catholic Church,”—our reply simply and briefly is, that, it is *that Church only*, which has, as yet, given evidence of a serious interference with our civil polity, and of a design, ultimately, to control our political institutions. And we add, with the same regard for our country's good, that, if any other sect or denomination of Christians shall so clearly evince the same design of incorporating ecclesiastical tyranny with the government of this country, as we think the Catholics have, we shall as earnestly and uncompromisingly oppose the one as we do the other.

Our “*hostility*,” “*proscription*,” “*opposition*,” and “*intolerance*,”—(for such are the heresies with which we are charged, withal),—extends *alike to any and all Churches and Sects*, and that too, just so far as they or any of them, interfere with the civil or political matters of our City, State, or General Government; but *no further—NO FURTHER*. Are we *right*, or are we *wrong*?

One among the many other objects of this party, is to REFORM all the numerous orders of mis-administration and political mal-practices which exists in almost every department of our State Government, and of which the people have so long and loudly complained. It will be our certain care to abolish altogether throughout the State all those unnecessary offices whose first cause of creation and only reason of existence *was and is* that they serve as a means by which the political aspirants when elected to power take money from the Public Purse to pay those who have most zealously pandered to his elevation.

It is the avowed attention of the A. R. Party to appoint *honest and capable* American Citizens only to the truly necessary offices of Govern-

ment and to administer the affairs of State with so strictly just and severely prudent a hand as greatly to reduce the public expenditures.

Wherever this party shall obtain dominion, whether in Federal State or Local Government, especial care will be taken so to control and correct the sure and impartial administration of Justice as not to suffer the guilty to escape, nor, in any case, to wink at those crimes and frauds committed in “*velvet and fine cloth, upon high places*,” but, on the contrary, to inflict the same relative degree of punishment *and with equal certainty*,—upon the million moneyed robber, who, whether under cover of Incorporate Privileges, or by what other means, swindles the community, robs the credulous, or beggars the widow and orphan, as that which is now so severely imposed upon the unfortunate and destitute, who, but too often are forced to the commission of the smallest crimes by extremest penury and want.

Upon this great subject the true fearless and impartial legislation and administration of just and rightful laws—which indeed is the truest basis of all good Governments and the surest conservation of all well ordered society—this party promises to bestow in both the State and National Legislatures a most thoughtful and earnest attention and to revise and adjust all such Bills, Statutes, Codes and Rights of Law as do not comport and accord with the present state and condition of the American people and to re-construct all such Courts of both Civil and Criminal jurisprudence as do not now afford speedy and even handed justice alike to the poor man and the rich. It is a most monstrous fault with many of our courts of both Equity and Law that Justice by legalized intricate and complex orders and forms of Law (all of which must be waded through at a heavy expense) is so far removed from the poor man as to render it impossible for him ever to obtain his rights. This is a serious evil and the more especially so for the reason that it is an evil affecting the worth and virtue of one of the most sacred and important Institutions of our government—the high and holy umpire of human Right and Wrong.

Upon the great political questions of the day—the Tariff, Currency, Public Lands, extension of Territory, &c., &c., it may be only necessary at present to state, in relation to the first, that while we are regardless of our Civil, Religious, and Political Rights, we are not forgetful of our Commercial, Manufacturing and Agricultural Interests; to the second, that the Public Domain should be made a revenue for Common School Education; to the third, that we are in favor of a sound reliable currency, which shall fully answer the requirements of commercial intercourse, without doing violence to the letter or spirit of the Constitution; to the fourth, that we are disposed to enlarge our Territory whenever a press of population renders it necessary.

The full sense of these, and questions of like character, however, have not yet (at this stage of our party's existence) been fully resolved upon.

With the next ensuing Presidential question (Clay and Polk), we have nothing to do: though we are frank to confess that we shall ever hereafter make that question as much a matter of political and party interest as the election of any other officer who is dependent upon our suffrage.

One word in relation to the true means of correcting the evil complained of relative to the franchise of foreigners. An opinion is entertained by many that it is not necessary for Congress to extend the term of Naturalization, whereby to prevent foreigners from voting until after a residence

here of twenty-one years, as our State Legislatures have sufficient power to remedy the evil. *This is a serious mistake.* Our State Legislatures have nothing whatever to do in the matter. Congress and Congress alone has the power "*to establish a uniform rule of naturalization throughout the United States;*" and when once a foreigner becomes *naturalized*, he is in every sense as much a citizen as though born in this country, and has ALL the rights (the Elective Franchise included) of the native born: and while the State Legislatures cannot confer the rights of citizenship and of franchise, so also they cannot take them away. It is true that a State has a RIGHT TO DETERMINE the time which CITIZENS born *without* her borders, *native* as well as *naturalized*, shall reside *within* them before they shall be entitled to a vote; but this State power cannot be substituted for the power to NATURALIZE *alone held by Congress*, and for the plain reason that it has the same bearing upon the native as well as the foreign born citizen. The State of New York (nor any other State) cannot confer upon a foreigner the right of franchise, though he may have resided within her borders twice twenty-one years, nor can she by any law prevent foreign born persons who have been naturalized under the law of Congress from voting at her polls unless by that same law the *native* born citizens of *other States* are in like manner prevented.

Space alone prevents a full and true exposition of this subject: It is hoped, however, that enough has been said (even so briefly) to satisfy all that our remedy, against an undue interference with our institutions, by the almost innumerable mass of foreigners who are yearly brought to our country, *is alone with Congress.*

The American Republican Party was *first* formed in this city, a little over one year since. We now hold the city government. We shall nominate, (and elect, we trust,) a Congressional Legislature, and State Senatorial Ticket this Fall. To those of our political faith and creed throughout the State, we say ORGANIZE immediately. Call the people together: explain to them the principles of the American Republican Party. Form association, and *wherever it is prudent*, nominate a Legislative Ticket. A State convention will be held at Utica on the 10th of September. *Let delegates from all parts of the State attend.* The General Ex-Committee of the American Republican Party of the city of New York, will be most happy, at all times, to afford all such information, documents and assistance, to either individuals or associations, as shall be in their power. Our object, AT PRESENT, is to disseminate our principles as much as possible, so that the great public mind may be prepared to decide upon their worth and virtue, immediately after the coming Presidential Election shall have passed. Our principles are already upon the winds, extending themselves throughout the broad expanse of our common country. The people far and near have caught the electric fire, and are only waiting for the pending Presidential question to be decided, when they will rise, and by one general concentration of principle and action, form one of the mightiest parties—TRULY AMERICAN—that has ever ruled the destinies of this Republic.

New-York City, August 20th, 1844.

ALEXANDER COPELAND, President.

ALFRED H. DAVIES, Secretary.

SIDNEY H. STUART, Chairman of Committee on Address.

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TITLE**